

## **DRAFTING ISSUE PAPERS FOR INCOMING RA**

**December 14, 2016**

**Please keep the paper to two pages or less and use a 12-point font.**

### **General Writing Tips**

**Know Your Audience.** Your audience is the incoming RA. Please assume the new RA has limited knowledge of EPA, especially specific program issues.

**Use Plain Language.** Avoid bureaucratic jargon and acronyms. Simplify complex terms.

**Be Fact-Based and Neutral in Tone.** Provide a well-rounded, objective picture of the issue for the new RA's consideration.

**Less is More - Focus on the Critical Issues.** Do not jam in all details. The paper is to give the new RA a big picture of important R9 issues and a head-start in the first 90 days.

**Remember – the paper is only one source of information and a starting point.** Based on the paper, the new RA may ask for additional information, including in-person briefings.

### **Using the Transition Issue Paper Template**

- 1. Topic Section: Keep it simple, short, and identifiable.**  
Include “what, where and when” if applicable (such as “XXX River Dam Removal, Elko, Nv”; “XXX State SIP Proposed Action, xxx date”; “Lead Cleanup, xxx, Hawaii”).
- 2. Issues Section: Summarize key points in one or two sentences.**  
There is much information to absorb in the first 90 days. Provide a clear and concise summary so the new RA can know the key points in advance and skim the rest.
- 3. Upcoming Milestones: Focus on major, high-level sequence of events and dates.**  
This section should clearly convey the nature and timing of expected RA actions. Make sure to highlight external deadlines (such as regulatory or court deadlines).
- 4. Background Section: Place the issue in context.**  
This section should capture elements of the larger story that make the issue important, such as: the nature and scope of environmental or health implications, legal obligations or public commitments, past and current actions, competing interests, and major challenges, concerns or sensitivities.
- 5. External Stakeholders Section: Account for different perspectives.**  
This section should shed light on likely key external players, including those who may reach out to EPA or the new RA, and their concerns.

6. **Moving Forward Section: Describe potential paths/options forward.**

The purpose is to help the new RA conceptualize possible different approaches to the issue or decision. (If you are coordinating with another division on this paper, you do not need to arrive at consensus for the options.) Leave recommendations for later.

7. **Lead Division and Other Key Offices Section:**

For other Key Divisions/Offices part, note other R9 divisions and HQ offices involved in the issue (such as ORC/OPA/HQ OLEM).